

APPLICATION
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TITLE: VITERBI DETECTION USING A CORRELATION METRIC

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VITERBI DETECTION USING A CORRELATION METRIC

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims the benefit of the priority of U.S. Provisional Application Serial No. 60/505,416, filed September 23, 2003 and entitled "Viterbi Detection for Sequences with Changing Amplitude"; and this application claims the benefit of the priority of U.S. Provisional Application Serial No. 60/505,947, filed September 24, 2003 and entitled "Polarity Monitoring for Spiral Servo Detection".

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0002] The present disclosure describes systems and techniques relating to signal processing, for example, interpreting read signals obtained from a magnetic storage medium.

BACKGROUND

[0003] Viterbi detection is a generally optimal detection scheme for a partial response sequence. For a given partial response channel and a sampled channel output sequence, the Viterbi detector can decide an input sequence to the partial response channel, which corresponds to an output sequence that is the closest to the sampled channel output sequence in the sense of Euclidean distance, or equivalently, the most likely input sequence. Traditional Viterbi detectors minimize the

Euclidean distance between the sampled sequence and the predicted sequence (the sequence determined by the Viterbi detector), thereby minimizing the probability of an incorrect sequence being predicted. Typically, an equalizer is used to reshape the response of a communication channel into a pre-known target partial response. A Viterbi detector can then be designed based on this target response.

[0004] Such Viterbi detectors are commonly used in signal processing circuits, which can be used to read a storage medium and process a discrete-time sampled waveform to obtain binary data stored on the medium. In magnetic-medium-based storage devices, a read-write head may fly on a cushion of air over a magnetic disk surface. The read-write head retrieves and records data on the magnetic layer of a rotating disk. When retrieving data, magnetic field variations are converted into an analog electrical signal, the analog signal is typically amplified, sampled, converted to a digital signal and interpreted. Moreover, tracking of stored data during a read operation is frequently performed using feedback or decision aided gain and timing control.

SUMMARY

[0005] The present disclosure includes systems and techniques relating to interpreting signals on a channel. When the gain factor of the partial response of the channel is changing or

unknown, but other parameters defining a partial response are well defined, the present systems and techniques can be used to accurately read the channel. According to an aspect of the described systems and techniques, an output signal sequence can be obtained from a partial response channel, an input sequence of the partial response channel can be determined by maximizing a correlation metric of an estimated output sequence with the obtained output sequence, where the estimated output sequence is estimated based on the partial response channel, and an output corresponding to the determined input sequence can be provided. An apparatus can include a branch metric generator that generates branch metrics comprising a correlation of obtained output sequences and estimated output sequences for a partial response channel. The apparatus can further include an add-compare-select component that compares paths and determines survivor paths using generated branch metrics, a memory that retains metrics information, and a trace-back component that determines a best path of the survivor paths and outputs sequence information based on the determined best path

[0006] Details of one or more implementations are set forth in the accompanying drawings and the description below. Other features, objects and advantages may be apparent from the description and drawings, and from the claims.

DRAWING DESCRIPTIONS

[0007] FIG. 1 is a flowchart illustrating Viterbi detection using a correlation metric.

[0008] FIG. 2 is a block diagram illustrating a signal processing apparatus that implements Viterbi detection using a correlation metric.

[0009] FIG. 3 is a block diagram illustrating a servo pattern writing system.

[0010] FIG. 4 is a block diagram illustrating a magnetic-medium disk drive that uses modified Viterbi detection and polarity monitoring to write servo information.

[0011] FIG. 5 illustrates spiral servo reference tracks on a disk surface.

[0012] FIG. 6 illustrates a finished servo pattern on a disk surface.

[0013] FIG. 7 is a block diagram illustrating a servo track generator that can be used in the disk drive of FIG. 4.

[0014] FIG. 8 illustrates a diamond shaped waveform obtained by reading a spiral servo reference track as though it were a circular, concentric track.

[0015] FIG. 9 shows a table presenting an example set of relationships between the input symbols and sampled channel outputs for a spiral servo reference track.

[0016] FIGS. 10 and 11 illustrate processing of a spiral servo reference track waveform.

[0017] FIGS. 12 and 13 illustrate numerical results for simulations of a servo track generator that uses modified Viterbi detection and polarity monitoring to accurately identify timing-reference symbols in a spiral servo reference track.

[0018] FIGS. 14-1, 14-2, 15-1, and 15-2 illustrate the phase uncertainty tolerance for simulations of traditional Viterbi detection and modified Viterbi detection.

[0019] Like reference symbols in the various drawings indicate like elements.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0020] FIG. 1 is a flowchart illustrating Viterbi detection using a correlation metric. An output signal sequence is obtained from a partial response channel (e.g., sampling a signal generated from a data storage medium) at 100. An input sequence of the partial response channel is determined by maximizing a correlation metric of an estimated output sequence with the obtained output sequence at 110. The estimated output sequence is estimated based on the partial response channel. An output corresponding to the determined input sequence is provided at 120.

[0021] Providing the output corresponding to the determined input sequence can involve providing the determined input sequence to an additional sequence processing component.

Providing the output corresponding to the determined input sequence can involve other or different outputs as well. Moreover, the output signal sequence obtained from the partial response channel can be a convolution of the input sequence and a target polynomial of the partial response channel.

[0022] The input sequence to a target channel can be defined as $B = [b_0 \ b_1 \ \cdots \ b_N]$, and the target partial response can be defined as $P = [p_0 \ p_1 \ \cdots \ p_M]$. If the channel noise is white, additive and Gaussian, then the output of the partial response channel can be given as $Y = [y_0 \ y_1 \ \cdots \ y_N]$, where

$$y_k = \sum_{i=0}^M b_{k-i} \cdot p_i + n_k, \text{ and } n_k \text{ is the additive white Gaussian noise.}$$

Y is the convolution of the input sequence and the target polynomial, as received.

[0023] A traditional Viterbi detector finds an input sequence, $\hat{B} = [\hat{b}_0 \ \hat{b}_1 \ \cdots \ \hat{b}_N]$, such that the corresponding output sequence of the partial response channel, $\hat{Y} = [\hat{y}_0 \ \hat{y}_1 \ \cdots \ \hat{y}_N]$, is the closest to the real sampled output sequence, Y , in the sense of Euclidean distance. Traditional Viterbi minimizes the

quantity, $\sum_{k=0}^N (y_k - \hat{y}_k)^2$, by the choice of \hat{B} .

[0024] When there is uncertainty about the gain of the partial response channel, then a gain factor can be introduced in the target partial response, and the target partial response can

be written as $P' = [\alpha p_0 \ \alpha p_1 \ \dots \ \alpha p_M]$. This equation assumes that the function only changes in the amplitude; the relative scaling of the different terms remains the same. The traditional Viterbi decision sequence should then be the estimated input sequence $\hat{B}' = [\hat{b}'_0 \ \hat{b}'_1 \ \dots \ \hat{b}'_N]$, which minimizes the quantity,

$$(1) \quad \sum_{k=0}^N (y_k - \hat{y}'_k)^2,$$

where $\hat{y}'_k = \sum_{i=0}^M \hat{b}'_{k-i} \cdot \alpha \cdot p_i = \alpha \cdot \sum_{i=0}^M \hat{b}'_{k-i} \cdot p_i = \alpha \cdot y_k^*$, and $y_k^* = \sum_{i=0}^M \hat{b}'_{k-i} \cdot p_i$. The quantity in equation (1) can be re-written as,

$$(2) \quad \sum_{k=0}^N (y_k - \hat{y}'_k)^2 = \sum_{k=0}^N (y_k - \alpha \cdot y_k^*)^2 = \sum_{k=0}^N y_k^2 + \alpha^2 \cdot \sum_{k=0}^N (y_k^*)^2 - 2\alpha \sum_{k=0}^N y_k \cdot y_k^*.$$

The three terms on the right side of equation (2) can be understood as the summation of the square of the real output of the channel, the summation of the square of the estimated channel output scaled by the channel gain factor, and the cross-correlation of the real channel output and the estimated channel output scaled by the channel gain factor. Since $\sum_{k=0}^N y_k^2$ is not a function of the choice of \hat{B} (the estimated input sequence), minimizing the quantity in equation (2) over B' is equivalent to minimizing

$$(3) \quad \alpha^2 \cdot \sum_{k=0}^N (y_k^*)^2 - 2\alpha \sum_{k=0}^N y_k \cdot y_k^*$$

or, since α is not a function of the estimated input,

$$(4) \quad \alpha \cdot \sum_{k=0}^N (y_k^*)^2 - 2 \sum_{k=0}^N y_k \cdot y_k^* .$$

[0025] When α is small, the first term in equation (4) can be ignored, and the Viterbi algorithm can be used to minimize the second term (i.e., maximize the correlation, as the second term is negative in equation (4)). When the noise power is not changing with the amplitude of the signal and the signal amplitude is very small, maximizing the second term is essentially the same as minimizing the whole quantity, providing close to optimal performance.

[0026] When the signal amplitude is very large, the first term in equation (4) is still ignored, resulting in less than optimal performance as compared with traditional Viterbi in terms of error probability. But because the signal to noise ratio (SNR) is higher with larger amplitudes of the signal, good results can still be obtained. By maximizing the correlation between the sampled sequence and the recovered sequence, received sequences can be accurately interpreted, even when the signal carrying the sequences has a widely varying amplitude. A signal processing apparatus using these techniques can be biased to the worst case, guaranteeing the performance of the worst case scenario.

[0027] FIG. 2 is a block diagram illustrating a signal processing apparatus 200 that implements Viterbi detection

using a correlation metric. The apparatus 200 can be implemented using the systems and techniques of conventional Viterbi detectors, including basing the operation on a trellis. The apparatus 200 includes a branch metric generator 210, an add-compare-select (ACS) component 220, a memory 230, and a traceback component 240. The branch metric generator 210 calculates correlation branch metrics between received data and predetermined code sequences, and supplies the results to the ACS component 220.

[0028] The ACS component 220 adds the branch metrics to any saved state metrics (i.e., retained correlation path metrics) according to a trellis, which shows the progression of the decoding in time based on the inputs. The ACS component 220 compares current correlation path metrics and selects the paths in the trellis with the best correlation path metrics (e.g., maximum or minimum value, depending on implementation). The selected paths and their path metrics can be saved in the memory 230. The memory 230 can be one or more random access memories, and can be integrated into the various components of the apparatus 200 (e.g., path metrics can be saved in a first memory integrated into the ACS component 220, and survivor paths can be saved in a second memory integrated into the traceback component 240).

[0029] The traceback component 240 looks at the survivor paths to identify the path having the largest correlation with the

received data, and outputs decoded data. If the target polynomial is $T(D) = p_0 + p_1D + \dots + p_M D^M$, then the trellis has 2^M states. A transition, or branch, in the trellis represents a possible change from state to state. For each of the states, a survivor path and a path metric can be updated and saved for each input sample to the detector.

[0030] Assuming binary data detection, for each current state there are two immediate previous states that lead into the current state. The path metric of this current state can be updated according to the following equation

$$(5) \quad pm_k^j = \max\{pm_{k-1}^m + bm_{m,j}, pm_{k-1}^n + bm_{n,j}\},$$

where pm_k^j is the path metric of the j -th state at time k ;

pm_{k-1}^m and pm_{k-1}^n are the path metrics at time $k-1$ of the m -th and n -th states, respectively, which lead into the j -th state; $bm_{x,j}$ is the metric of the branch that connects the x -th state (m or n) and the j -th state, and can be defined as:

$$(6) \quad bm_{x,j} = y_k \cdot \hat{y}_k,$$

where \hat{y}_k is the ideal noiseless output associated with that branch.

[0031] Once the path metric for the j -th state is decided, its path memory can also be decided by inheriting the path memory of the one of the two previous states (m or n) that gives it the best path metric, and adding to this inherited path the

most current one of the binary bits that constitute the current, j -th, state. Using these modified Viterbi decoding techniques, all the survivor paths associated with all the different states can merge in M steps (e.g., M clock cycles), and thus the path memories need not be longer than M in some implementations.

[0032] The apparatus 200 can also include a controller, and input and output buffers, including a frame synchronization mechanism. The apparatus 200 can be implemented in any number of different systems and devices, including communications equipment (e.g., in wireless communications where fading issues and varying-amplitude signals are common) and data storage equipment. For example, the apparatus 200 can include a read channel, which can be implemented as one or more integrated circuit (IC) devices, and the read channel can include a variable-gain amplifier (VGA), a filter, and an ADC (analog to digital converter). The range of the signal to be processed can be estimated in advance, and the target partial response for use in the modified Viterbi detector can be based on the maximum value of this range estimate.

[0033] FIG. 3 is a block diagram illustrating an example system in which the modified Viterbi detection can be used. A servo pattern writing system 300 includes one or more sensors 320 that are used with an attached storage medium 330 (e.g., a platter in a disk drive coupled with the servo writer) to

locate the radial and circumferential position of a write head. A control system 310 uses information from the sensor(s) 320 and causes the write head to produce a pattern of information on the storage medium 330.

[0034] The system 300 represents a self-servo scheme that can significantly reduce the time and expense of the servo-writing process. Instead of slowly writing servo information on every track, a much smaller number of spiral servo reference tracks with particular data pattern(s) can be written from OD (outside diameter) to ID (inside diameter) on a disk surface by moving the write head at a constant linear velocity from OD to ID evenly while the disk is spinning at a constant angular velocity. The spiral servo reference tracks provide a defined pattern over the disk surface but are not themselves servo information, as they cannot be used as a master reference by a disk drive during normal operation to locate tracks and sectors for data storage.

[0035] The spiral servo reference tracks can be used by a device other than the servo writer to acquire timing information used in accurately deciding the position of the head, both radially and circumferentially. This same device can then write servo information (e.g., conventional servo patterns) onto one or more disk surfaces, including the disk surface with the spiral reference tracks. For example, the system 300 can be used in a manufacturing process to put

spiral servo reference tracks on a single platter in a hard drive. Then the hard drive's own read-write head(s) and servo system can be used to write servo information onto all the platters in the disk drive based on the timing information acquired from the spiral servo reference tracks.

[0036] FIG. 5 illustrates spiral servo reference tracks 500 on a disk surface 510. FIG. 6 illustrates a finished servo pattern on the disk surface 510. FIGS. 5 and 6 illustrate the track patterns on the disk surfaces generally and do not indicate particular dimensions or units. The finished servo pattern shown can include conventional servo information, which is written in servo spokes or wedges 620 over the spiral tracks 500 on the disk surface 510. The number of spiral tracks 500 can be at least twice as large as the number of servo spokes 620 to be written on each surface. This can help in guaranteeing that even if some of the spiral tracks 500 are over-written by the servo spokes 620 during the self-servo writing process, there are still enough spiral tracks 500 to provide sufficient head-positioning information for the process to go on to completion. Once the servo information has been written, the spiral tracks 500 are no longer needed and can be overwritten by data tracks.

[0037] FIG. 4 is a block diagram illustrating a magnetic-medium disk drive that uses modified Viterbi detection and polarity monitoring to write servo information. The disk

drive includes a head-disk assembly (HDA) 400 and drive electronics 450 (e.g., a printed circuit board (PCB) with semiconductor devices). The HDA 400 includes several disks 410 mounted on an integrated spindle and motor assembly 415. The motor assembly 415 rotates the disks 410 near read-write heads connected with a head assembly 420 in the HDA 400. The disks 410 can be coated with a magnetically hard material (e.g., a particulate surface or a thin-film surface) and can be written to or read from a single side or both sides of each disk.

[0038] A head 432 on an arm 430 can be positioned as needed to read data on the disk. A motor (e.g., a voice coil motor or a stepper motor) can be used to position the heads over the desired track(s). The arm 430 can be a pivoting or sliding arm and can be spring-loaded to maintain a proper flying height for the head 432 in any drive orientation. A closed-loop head positioning system can be used.

[0039] The HDA 400 can include a read-write chip 440, where head selection and sense current value(s) can be set. The read-write chip 440 can amplify a read signal before outputting it to signal processing circuitry 470. The signal processing circuitry 470 can include a read signal circuit, a servo signal processing circuit, and a write signal circuit.

[0040] Signals between the HDA 400 and the drive electronics 450 can be carried through a flexible printed cable. A

controller 480 can direct a servo controller 460 to control mechanical operations, such as head positioning through the head assembly 420 and rotational speed control through the motor assembly 415. The controller 480 can be one or more integrated circuit (IC) chips (e.g., a combo chip). The controller 480 can be a microprocessor and a hard disk controller. The drive electronics 450 can also include various interfaces, such as a host-bus interface, and memory devices, such as a read only memory (ROM) for use by a microprocessor, and a random access memory (RAM) for use by a hard disk controller.

[0041] The HDA 400 and drive electronics 450 can be closed in a sealed container with an integral air filter. For example, the hard disk drive can be assembled using a Winchester assembly. The rotating platter can be driven by a brush-less DC motor, and the rotational frequency can be accurately servo-locked to a crystal reference.

[0042] The disk drive includes a servo track generator that obtains timing information from the spiral servo reference track on the machine-readable medium and writes a servo track on the machine-readable medium based on the obtained timing information. The servo track generator can be composed of multiple sets of coordinating circuitry and can be integrated with the components described above or organized into a separate component of the disk drive. For example, the servo

track generator can be integrated into the controller 480 and the signal processing circuitry 470.

[0043] FIG. 7 is a block diagram illustrating a servo track generator 700 that can be used in the disk drive of FIG. 4. The servo track generator 700 includes a modified Viterbi detector 710 that decodes a repeating pattern in the spiral servo reference track, using the systems and techniques described above in connection with FIGS. 1 and 2, for multiple framings of the repeating pattern. The servo track generator 700 also includes framing and polarity monitoring circuitry 720, 730 that indicates one of the multiple framings as a proper framing and indicates reversed polarity based on the repeating pattern in the spiral servo reference track.

[0044] The framing and polarity monitoring circuitry 720, 730 can include output pattern correlation accumulators that retain measures of correlation between sampled output and expected output for pattern transitions in the encoded repeating pattern for the multiple framings used by the modified Viterbi detector 710. The framing and polarity monitoring circuitry 720, 730 can identify reversed polarity by checking if a signal-indicated framing is different than a pattern-transition-correlation indicated framing.

Alternatively, the framing and polarity monitoring circuitry 720, 730 can identify reversed polarity by checking for an inordinate number of timing-reference symbols in the decoded

pattern.

[0045] An output selector 740 can select the appropriately framed, decoded output from the detector 710 and reverse the polarity of the decoded output, if needed, based on the output of the framing circuitry 720 and the output of the polarity circuitry 730. A more detailed example of the operations of a servo track generator in a storage device is now described in connection with FIGS. 8-11.

[0046] FIG. 8 illustrates a diamond shaped waveform 800 obtained by reading a spiral servo reference track as though it were a circular, concentric track. Once a spiral servo reference track is written on a disk surface, a read head that passes over the disk surface in a circular fashion intersects the track at an angle. Because of this angle, the signal the head picks up from the spiral track has a diamond-shaped amplitude. FIG. 8 illustrates this diamond shaped waveform, plotting the signal amplitude against an index of samples (the data being sixteen times oversampled for purposes of illustration). Determining the head position can be generally translated into deciding the peak position of the diamond-shaped waveform 800.

[0047] The spiral tracks are written using a repeating pattern. This repeating pattern can be identified using the modified Viterbi detection techniques described above. Because the read back waveform 800 has a widely varying

amplitude that is independent of noise power, the described spiral servo reference detector for data storage channels in hard drives is a good example of an application for a modified Viterbi detector as described.

[0048] The data pattern in a spiral reference track can be a repeating sequence of multiple one symbols followed by a zero symbol (e.g., twenty nine ones plus a zero, and then repeat).

This reference track pattern can be generated using gray-coded symbols. The symbols can be coded using a Manchester code. For example, the symbols can be coded according to the following rules: a one symbol is mapped to 0011, and a zero symbol is mapped to 1100. When the pattern is 29 one symbols followed by 1 zero symbol, the length of the repeating pattern is 30 Gray coded symbols or 120 channel bits. One repetition of the sequence is referred to as one frame, and a typical length of the diamond-shaped waveform 800 can be 6 frames, or 720 channel bits.

[0049] As illustrated in FIG. 8, whenever there is a zero symbol in the sequence of one symbols, there is a gap 810 in the waveform 800. These zero symbols serve as landmarks for additional accuracy in deciding timing and can be accurately and reliably located in the waveform 800. In addition to other factors that affect the detection of the zero symbols, such as changing amplitude and noise, there is also the sampling phase and the polarity of the waveform. In practice,

the sampling phase and the polarity of the waveform 800 may be unknown when it comes time to read a spiral servo reference track (e.g., a new read operation can require a new stimulating current for the read head, which can impart a random polarity to the read signal in a disk drive).

[0050] FIG. 9 shows a table 900 presenting an example set of relationships between the input symbols and sampled channel outputs for a spiral servo reference track. Because of the rate $\frac{1}{4}$ coding, which maps "1" to "0011" and "0" to "1100", there is only one bit of information for every four channel bits. To reliably detect the underlying symbols from the sampled sequence, the sampled sequence should be correctly framed into groups of four samples so that each group of four samples is truly correlated to one particular symbol.

[0051] Based on the possible sampling phases, there can be two different targets for a modified Viterbi detector, both targets being approximate targets. The table 900 shows the targets for peak sampling and shoulder sampling in the fifth and sixth columns, respectively. FIGS. 14 and 15 illustrate the phase uncertainty tolerance for simulations of traditional Viterbi detection and modified Viterbi detection. Peak sampling is assumed in the simulations, and thus the corresponding target in the fifth column of the table 900 is used. Both detection techniques are tested using all possible sampling phases and sixteen times over-sampling; thus, there

are sixty four sampling phases that cover a complete symbol duration with sixteen times over-sampling.

[0052] As shown in Figs. 14-1 and 14-2 a first table 1400 shows the simulation results using traditional Viterbi detection, and Figs. 15-1 and 15-2 a second table 1500 shows the simulation results using the new Viterbi detection. In these two tables, the vertical indices represent time, which is linearly related to the change in signal amplitude. In this example, as time goes on, the signal amplitude is linearly increased from zero to a maximum value and then is linearly decreased to zero. Each step on the time indices is one symbol duration or four channel clock cycles. The time indices do not cover the entire diamond-shaped waveform. They cover the first one or two frames at the beginning of the waveform, which is sufficient to compare the two approaches.

[0053] The horizontal indices represent different sampling phases covering a complete symbol duration. An over-sampling rate of sixteen is used, and as there are four channel clock cycles per symbol, there are a total of sixty four (16×4) different sampling phases.

[0054] In the simulations illustrated, the perfect sampling phase is at the center of each table. An ex mark in the table represents detection of a one symbol, and an underscore mark represents detection of a zero symbol. A correctly detected sequence should be an almost all ones sequence with the zero

symbol appearing every thirty symbols starting at the thirty ninth position.

[0055] Comparing the two tables 1400 and 1500 illustrates that the new modified Viterbi detector provides accurate detection decisions with robust tolerance of phase uncertainty, even when the amplitude of the signal is very small (i.e., as indicated by small numbers in the vertical indices). In contrast, only when the signal amplitude is large can the traditional Viterbi detector make correct decisions, and the range of phase error tolerance is much smaller (i.e., narrower bars of exes indicate reduced sampling phase range). Thus, the new Viterbi detection approach can produce high accuracy with a large sampling phase range, providing very good performance with a signal of changing amplitude and high phase uncertainty. The new Viterbi detector can provide relatively uniform response by phase, and good decisions are made as long as the sampling phase is fairly close to expectations (e.g., good decisions can be made even if the sampling phase is off from the optimal sampling phase by $\pm \frac{\pi}{2}$).

[0056] In the context of spiral servo reference detection, the framing and/or sampling phase may be unknown beforehand. However, information regarding the frequency of the channel bits is available, and this information can be used to set the sampling rate. The read-back waveform can be sampled using

the channel bit clock rate with an arbitrary sampling phase, and thus one sample can be collected for every channel bit. The phase of this sampling is unknown at the time the sampling begins. However, because a single symbol has a duration of four channel clock cycles, the four samplings in the duration of a symbol represent four sampling phases for framing the sequence for the duration of the symbol; one of the four phases is closest to the optimal sampling phase.

[0057] To overcome the uncertainty in framing and sampling phase, sequence detection can be performed for each of the four possible framings of the sampled sequence, and the results saved. After further processing, the best of the four framings can be determined, and the corresponding detection results can be chosen as the final results of the detection. Although the uncertainty of the sampling phase as measured by a fraction of a channel clock cycle is still present, the systems and techniques described allow selection of a framing phase that is within plus or minus half a channel clock cycle of the optimal sampling phase, and thus acceptable performance can be provided.

[0058] FIGS. 10 and 11 illustrate processing of a spiral servo reference track waveform. A symbol sequence 1000 is an example portion of a spiral servo reference track sequence of consecutive one symbols followed by one zero symbol and then one symbols again. A corresponding rate $\frac{1}{4}$ encoded sequence of

channel bits 1020 is shown just below the symbol sequence 1000. A digital waveform 1040 illustrates the positive and negative transitions used in writing the encoded sequence 1020 to a storage medium. An analog waveform 1060 illustrates the corresponding signal obtained by reading the spiral servo reference track. As shown, a positive transition in the binary waveform results in a positive pulse in the read back signal, and a negative transition in the binary waveform results in a negative pulse in the read back signal. The zero symbol is thus indicated in the read back signal by a longer than usual distance between two adjacent signal peaks.

[0059] When sampling the waveform 1060, it is important to have proper framing, where each set of four samples is accurately correlated with the corresponding symbol. A sequence of baud-rate samples 1080 corresponds to the sampled analog waveform 1060 (assuming shoulder sampling). The pluses, minuses, and zeros represent the polarity of the sample. FIG. 11 illustrates a trellis 1150 that includes the described states and the predefined sample polarities that indicate a valid transition from one state to another. As shown, there are four kinds of transitions from symbol to symbol, and each transition has a corresponding sampled output (i.e., the transition polarity patterns shown between the old bit pattern on the left and the new bit pattern on the right).

[0060] Most of the symbols in the spiral servo reference track

sequence are repeated one symbols, which generate a sinusoidal type waveform at the read back point, as shown (a repeating pattern of --++ samples). Samples from this approximate sinusoidal portion of the waveform 1060 can be used to decide an initial framing for sampling. Samples from the sinusoidal waveform can be used to chop the sequence into groups of 4 samples so that each group of 4 corresponds to one input symbol. A certain polarity (e.g., positive) of the waveform can be assumed here, and this assumption can be checked later on and corrected if found to be inaccurate. Although shoulder sampling is discussed as a system model used to carry on detection, the systems and techniques described can work equally well with any initial phase setting; the sampling phase can be completely random. When setting the initial framing for sampling, several groups of the repeating one symbol sections can be averaged together to reduce the effects of noise in the signal.

[0061] As noted above, setting the initial framing in this manner assumes that the polarity of the signal is known. Reversing the polarity of the signal results in the opposite grouping. For example, if a sampled sequence should be:

xx+-+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+00--00+-+--+,

but the polarity is reversed, then the sampled sequence will be:

xx--+-+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+00++00--+-+--.

Based on the sinusoidal part of the sampled sequence alone, the framing would then initially be decided incorrectly to be:

xx,---+,---+,---+,---+,---+,---+,--00,++00,---+,--xx.

A reversed sinusoidal waveform is still a sinusoidal waveform, and a framing that is based solely on a reversed sinusoidal waveform will result in a framing that is shifted from the correct framing by two channel bits.

[0062] Comparing the incorrectly framed samples above with the trellis 1150 shows that the grouped samples "--00" and "++00" are not valid symbol-to-symbol transitions because they do not match the ideal channel output patterns shown in the trellis 1150. With such a wrong framing of the samples, Viterbi detection is likely to make incorrect decisions at those transitions.

[0063] In the case of reversed polarity with correct framing, the sampled sequence is divided into groups of four samples that are all valid transition patterns according to the trellis 1150. However, Viterbi detection on these samples yields a sequence of symbols with reversed polarity. For example, the detection results based on the following sampled sequence and framing,

xx--,++--,++--,++--,++--,++--,++--,00++,00--,++--,

would be,

"0" "0" "0" "0" "0" "0" "0" "1" "0" "0".

Thus, when the wrong framing is initially selected as

described above, this incorrect framing is off from the correct framing by two channel clock cycles, and the error in the initial framing can be detected in the grouped samples when there is a 1→0 or a 0→1 transition.

[0064] The 1→0 and 0→1 transitions are associated with the output patterns 00-- and 00++, respectively, when the framing is correct. In contrast, the 1→0 and 0→1 transitions are associated with the output patterns --00 and ++00, respectively, when the framing is incorrect. Thus, by decoding the spiral servo reference track pattern using multiple framings (e.g., two framings as indicated by the sinusoidal part of the waveform, or all four possible framings) and then correlating samples indicating pattern transitions in the multiple framings with valid output pattern transitions, the proper framing and thus the proper decoded output can be determined.

[0065] A modified Viterbi detector, as described above, can decode the spiral servo reference track pattern multiple times using the four possible framings. The modified Viterbi detector can handle the changing amplitude. Moreover, because the branch metric calculation is simplified in the modified Viterbi detector, decoding decisions can be made very rapidly.

[0066] For each framing, whenever the Viterbi detector sees a 1→0 or a 0→1 transition, the detector can correlate the corresponding group of four samples with the valid pattern of

output associated with the transition. In practice, this correlation need not take into consideration all four samples, as the difference between the expected output and the sampled output when the framing is wrong can be seen in each of the samples (e.g., each of the four samples, --00, for a 1→0 transition identified using the wrong framing on a reversed polarity waveform is different than the expected four samples, 00--, for a correct framing of a normal polarity waveform). The correlation can be accumulated into four integrators, one for each framing. After a number of 1→0 and/or 0→1 transitions, the four accumulators associated with the four framings can be compared. The number of transitions to be observed before the values can be used can depend on the signal to noise ratio of the particular application. A typical number of transitions needed can be around 100. Additionally, the number of transitions to be observed can be made programmable in a system.

[0067] The accumulator with the largest value indicates that its corresponding framing is the correct framing. If the decoded output for the correct framing has more zero symbols than one symbols, or if the initial framing indicated by the generally sinusoidal portion of the waveform is different than the correct framing, this indicates that the polarity has been reversed, and the decoded output symbols can be reversed in polarity to provide the correct output.

[0068] FIGS. 12 and 13 illustrate numerical results for simulations of a servo track generator that uses modified Viterbi detection and polarity monitoring to accurately identify timing-reference symbols in a spiral servo reference track. In these example simulations, the symbol sequence is a repeating pattern of seven ones and one zero. The channel is assumed to be equalized to PR4 (Class-4 Partial Response) target, and an ideal shoulder sampling phase is granted. White, additive Gaussian noise is added to the waveform so that the peak-to-rms (root mean square) SNR is about 12 dB (Decibel).

[0069] A first table 1200 shows the results of the Viterbi detection output and the accumulator values for all four framings (phases 0, 1, 2, and 3) of a waveform with correct polarity. The Viterbi detector performs detection on all four framing phases, and the accumulated correlation values are saved for all four framing phases. Based on the sinusoidal part of the waveform, the best framing is initially decided to be phase 2. Then the accumulator of phase 2 is compared with the accumulator of phase 0 (the opposite phase, which is two clock cycles away). Because the accumulator for phase 2 holds a larger value than the accumulator for phase 0, the initial choice of phase 2 as the best framing phase is confirmed, and the associated detected symbol sequence is chosen to be the final output of the detection.

[0070] A second table 1300 shows the results of the Viterbi detection output and the accumulator values for all four framings of a waveform with reversed polarity. Again, the Viterbi detector performs detection on all four framing phases, and the accumulated correlation values are saved for all four framing phases. Based on the sinusoidal part of the waveform, the best framing is initially decided to be phase 0. Then the accumulator of phase 0 is compared with the accumulator of phase 2 (the opposite phase, which is two clock cycles away). Because the accumulator for phase 0 holds a smaller value than the accumulator for phase 2, the initial choice of phase 0 as the best framing phase is rejected because the polarity of the waveform has been reversed, the opposite framing (phase 2) is selected as the best framing phase, and the detected symbol sequence associated with phase 2 is chosen, with polarities of all the bits reversed, to be the final output of the detection.

[0071] In the second simulation, the wrong framing phase based on the sinusoidal part of the waveform gives a symbol error rate of approximately 0.124, but with polarity monitoring, the symbol error rate is reduced to approximately 2.625×10^{-4} . Thus, using the polarity monitoring as described significantly improves the accurate identification of the timing-reference symbols in the spiral servo reference track.

[0072] A few embodiments have been described in detail above,

and various modifications are possible. Thus, other embodiments may be within the scope of the following claims.